

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5215

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T ALGIERS 2327

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS

SUBJECT: TERRORISM: WHEREABOUTS OF CARLOS

1. SUMMARY: RESPONSIBLE ALGERIAN DENIES CARLOS PASSED THROUGH HERE ENROUTE BELGRADE SEPT 6. SPECULATES THAT INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES OUT TO BLACKEN ALGERIAN NAME. DIFFCULT EVALUATE DENIAL. REUQUEST DEPARTMENT'S EVALUATION BELGRADE STORY. END SUMMARY.

2. MORNING SEPT. 29 I RASIED WITH DIRECTOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY ABDELMAJID ADJALI REPORT THT CARLOS ARRIVED IN BELGRADE SEPT . 6 ON COMMERCIAL FLIGHT FROM ALGIERS. I SAID WE HAD INFORMATION THAT CARLOS AND COMPANIONS WERE SEEN ON ARRIVAL AT BELGRADE BY RELIABLE WITNESSES AND THAT THEIR PRESENCE IN YUGOSLAVIA HAD BEEN VERIFIED. THIS WAS A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO MY GOVERNMENT, WHICH COULD NOT VISUALIZE CARLOS PASSING THROUGH ALGERIA WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE AND PERMISSION OF ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT. I HAD ACTIVELY DEFENDED ALGERIANS AGAINST ACCUSATIONS MADE BY VARIOUS PEOPLE AT TIME OF OPEC KIDNAPPING AND I NOW FOUND MYSELF SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED BY CARLOS STORY. WHAT COULD ADJALI TELL ME ABOUT IT?

3. ADJALI REACTED IN VERY LIVELY FASHION, SAYING HE WOULD PERHAPS SAY SOME THINGS I WOULD FIND UNPLEASANT BUT

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HE WANTED TO SPEAK MAN-TO-MAN. ALGERIANS WERE VERY

CONCERNED AT WAY IN WHICH THIS STORY BEING SPREAD BY SPECIAL SERVICES OF VARIOUS COUNTRIES--WHETHER AMERICAN, WEST GERMAN OR WHATEVER (BY LATTER PHRASE HE APPEARED TO MEAN FRENCH). THEY WERE CONCERNED THAT ALGERIA BEING MADE A TARGET OF THESE RUMORS FOR MOTIVES WHICH WERE NOT CLEAR TO THEM.

4. ADJALI WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED MATTER AT GREAT LENGTH WITH BOUTEFLIKA ON DAY THAT NEW STORY BROKE. ON BASIS OF THIS TALK, HE SAID, HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT STORY HAD BEEN DENIED AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT. CARLOS HAD NOT BEEN IN ALGIERS AND HE HAD NOT BEEN ON THAT FLIGHT. ADJALI HAD ALSO CALLED IN WEST GERMAN CHARGE AND DEMANDED EXPLANATION. CHARGE HAD RETURNED SUBSEQUENTLY WITH WEST GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT WHICH DID NOT MENTION ALGERIAN ANGLE IN STORY. YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR HAD DENIED CATEGORICALLY THAT CARLOS HAD BEEN IN YUGOSLAVIA.

5. ALGERIANS UNABLE TO EXPLAIN BASIS OF RUMOR ADJALI SAID. WHETHER IT WAS CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY, ILL INTENTIONS, OR WHAT, THEY DID NOT KNOW. HE COMMENTED THAT, IF SERVICES OF GREAT POWER SUCH AS U.S. INVOLVED, IT HARDLY CONCEIVABLE THAT ERROR AS ELEMENTARY AS ONE OF MISTAKING IDENTITY COULD HAVE BEEN MADE, AND IT WOULD BE MORE LOGICAL TO ATTRIBUTE STORY TO SOME SORT OF DISINFORMATION EFFORT. YUGOSLAVS, HE NOTED, HAD BRACKETED STORY WITH CROATIAN TERRORIST HIJACKING AND IMPLIED AMERICANS BEHIND IT.

6. FURTHER DISQUIETING ASPECT OF THIS TO ALGERIANS WAS HOW SPECIAL SERVICES OF THE U.S. OR ANY OTHER POWER WERE IN POSITION TO KNOW AND SAY WHO WAS ON AIRCRAFT LEAVING ALGIERS. IF THEY WERE IN SUCH A POSITION, ALGERIA MUST TAKE COUNTERMEASURES. SECONDLY, WHY HAD THOSE SPECIAL SERVICES CHOSEN TO AGITATE THIS QUESTION AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME? WERE THEY PERHAPS TRYING TO SABOTAGE ALGERIA'S RELATIONS WITH THIRD COUNTRIES? HE DID NOT KNOW. ALL HE KNEW WAS HE WAS VERY DISTURBED BY THE MANNER IN WHICH

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THIS WAS BEING DONE. HE REALIZED THAT SECURITY SERVICES HAD THEIR JOB TO DO BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT DIPLOMATS NOT LET THEM TRAMPLE ON THEIR WORK. I COULD INFORM MY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY THAT THE STORY WAS WITHOUT FOUNDATION AND THAT IF IT HAD BEEN TRUE THE ALGERIANS WOULD HAVE REACTED QUITE DIFFERENTLY. THEY WOULD HAVE SAID IT WAS NOBODY'S BUSINESS BUT THEIR OWN.

7. REFERRING BACK TO THE VIENNA KIDNAPPING, ADJALI SAID ALGERIA HAD INTERVENED AT THE DIRECT REQUEST OF THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT. THEY HAD SENT AMBASSADORS TO VIENNA AND DONE EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO SAVE THE LIVES OF PEOPLE INVOLVED AS CONTRASTED WITH THE FECKLESS ATTITUDE OF THEIR NEIGHBORS, WHO HAD RECENTLY CLOSED THEIR AIRPORT AND TOLD THE CREW OF A HIJACKED AIRPLANE TO MAKE THEIR OWN ARRANGEMENTS. FOR THEIR TROUBLES THE ALGERIANS HAD BEEN TARGET OF ACCUSATIONS IN VARIOUS CIRCLES THAT THEY WERE SOMEHOW INVOLVED IN THE KIDNAPPING. DIPLOMATS IN WASHINGTON AND ELSEWHERE SHOULD INFORM THEMSELVES BETTER.

8. THE ABOVE SUMMARIZES A TWENTY MINUTE DISCOURSE BY ADJALI WHO SEEMED CEARLY AGITATED BY MY QUESTION. I ASSURED HIM IT WAS NOT AMERICAN SERVICES WHICH HAD ORIGINATED THE STORY. HE SAID HE VERY PLEASED TO HEAR THIS BECAUSE HE HAD BEEN WORRIED THAT AMERICANS WERE OUT TO CAUSE TROUBLE.

9. COMMENT: WE UNABLE EVALUATE ADJALI'S DENIAL. HE SPOKE WITH EVERY EVIDENCE OF SINCERITY, BUT IS SKILLFUL SPEAKER AND MAY WELL HAVE BEEN FEEDING US A LINE. FOR ALGERIANS TO COOPERATE WITH CARLOS WOULD BE CONTRARY TO THEIR PROFESSED POLICY OF OPPOSING AIRCRAFT HIJACKING AND SIMILAR ACTS OF TERRORISM, BUT NOT NECESSARILY CONTRARY TO DESIGNS OF THEIR OWN SPECIAL SERVICES. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S FRANK ASSESSMENT OF INTELLIGENCE WE HAVE RECEIVED ON BELGRADE INCIDENT TO DATE.PARKER

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